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THE RELIGION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The original of the work of which we have before us an English translation¹ was published in 1903,² and was intended, as the author stated in his preface, to supplement his *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, by showing the unity underlying the various types of religious teaching set forth in the latter. In pursuing this new task the veteran author believes that he has used only historical methods and has reached historical results. The book may be described as setting forth the ideas about religion one will have who thoroughly understands the New Testament and heartily believes its teachings.

Whether the author has succeeded as fully as he believes that he has done, in separating his own theological views from the material which he handles, may be doubted. Many will say that a treatise which, e. g., defines the nature of divine revelation cannot be called a purely historical discussion. They would also say that the presentation of a body of doctrine as the teaching of the New Testament imputes to its several authors a more completely wrought-out theology than some, at least, of them had. Why, e. g., should Paul's teaching about mystic union with Christ, or the value of the Lord's Supper, be made a part of the "Religion of the New Testament?" Whether much or little weight be allowed to these criticisms, a treatise in biblical dogmatics written by a man possessing such learning, insight, and literary power as Dr. Weiss has, is well worth reading, and the publishers have earned the gratitude of the English and American public in printing an English version of it.

It must, however, be said with frankness that the work of translation has not been well done. Elegance and spirit could perhaps hardly have been expected in a work of this character; but an accurate presentation of the thought of the original in fairly idiomatic English was required of the translator. This requirement has not been met. The retention of the German idiom sometimes disfigures the English: as, e. g., (p. 254) "God has made Jesus of Nazareth to (sic) the Lord;" (p. 256) "It suits to the exalted Christ;" (p. 30) "their conduct over against (*gegen*) these." Errors are not infrequent: (p. 3) "With the consciousness of this personal relation with God true religion can only begin" (Only with the consciousness can true religion begin). On p. 267 (German, p. 199) a glaring mistake reversing the author's meaning appears. "And the so-called trinity of revelation . . . the Scriptures do not teach." What Weiss says is,

¹ *The Religion of the New Testament*. By Bernhard Weiss. Translated from the German by George H. Schodde. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. 431 pages. \$2.00.

² For review of the original with extended statement of the author's views, see this *Journal*, Vol. VIII, pp. 95 ff.

"Beyond the so-called 'trinity of revelation' the New Testament does not go." ("Ueber die so-gennante Offenbarungs-trinität. . . . geht das Neue Testament nicht hinaus.")

The translation does injustice to Dr. Weiss, and is not worthy of bearing the name of the publishers who issue it. It should be thoroughly revised. In one respect the version deserves commendation; it has a good index, a feature lacking to the original.

In his introductory section Dr. Kögel³ makes a plea for old-fashioned exegesis—the minute study of sacred Scripture, passage by passage, with the view of gaining by insight into details knowledge of the meaning of the whole. He thinks that the prevailing fondness for the so-called "historical method" represented by such writers as Gunkel, a method which endeavors chiefly to find out the place which the portions of Scripture hold in the historical evolution of religious thought, has caused the detailed examination of Scriptural passages to be neglected.

In the study of no part of the New Testament is this neglect to be more regretted, he thinks, than in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is a document especially difficult of comprehension. The anonymous author gives his thoughts in a form peculiarly his own. To understand them it is necessary to find the essence of the thought by penetrating beneath the garb it wears. This can be done only by minute examination of the language, and elucidation of the meaning point by point. Until this is done, endeavors to decide upon the historical relations of the epistle are of little value.

The section chosen for study (Heb. 2:5-18) is believed by Dr. Kögel to be the central point of the letter, "inasmuch as it discusses the question of supreme interest to the author and to his readers; and mentions the point from which all that precedes and all that follows is explained."

The study given to the passage is a fine specimen of thorough and sober exegesis. Without following the discussion, it is perhaps sufficient to say that Kögel explains the passage as an elaborate argument aimed at removing the difficulty presented to Jewish faith in Jesus' messiahship by his humiliation and death. The writer argues that only by the Cross could he have become the Son of God in the messianic sense. Only as one with men in their lot of weakness and mortality could he gain the capacity of sympathizing with them and gaining their affection, which is the condition of his highpriestly work. "In the word 'Son' the entire content of

³ *Der Sohn und die Söhne: Eine exegetische Studie zu Hebräer 2:5-18.* Von Julius Kögel. 144 pages. *Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie.* Achter Jahrgang 1904, 5. u. 6. Heft. Herausgegeben von A. Schlatter und D. W. Lüttger. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.

the person as well as of the work of Christ is comprised." And this thought is the keynote of the epistle—Christ is the true priest because he is the Son of God.

The metaphysical and the messianic conceptions meet and interpenetrate each other. Because Jesus is the Messiah, he is the eternal Son: "Jesus is as the Son the true, complete mediator from eternity."

The argument Kögel holds is one which in its adaptation to the Jewish mind suggests a Jewish-Christian constituency.

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A most interesting popular movement in Germany is that of "vacation conferences." From these are being published brief, popular courses of lectures on great themes, which often form an excellent summary of important subjects. One such course from Greifswald on *Die Autorität der Bibel* was reviewed in this *Journal* in October. Another from the first session of the *Ferienkursus* of Hesse and Nassau now comes to hand.⁴ The volume treats of the conceptions of God found in Judaism and in the teachings of Christ, Paul, and of the gospel of John, respectively. It is significant that in the heading of the section on the teaching of Jesus, instead of *Gottesgedanke* as in the others, we have *Gottesoffenbarung*. The interest of the reader will be sure to center in the chapters on Paul and the fourth gospel, for the teaching of both is placed in sharp contrast to that of Jesus. The peculiarity which marked off Jesus' conception of God from any earlier conception is that the Father is "a sinner-loving God." The forgiveness of God does not depend upon sacrifice, or upon belief, whether in Jesus' messiahship or in anything else. It depends only upon the humble turning of the soul to God. Paul, on the contrary, built up his thought of God, not from the ethical, but from the scribal idea. He could not think of sin forgiven, unless it were atoned for. Two facts stand at the basis of his ideas: Jesus is the Messiah; the Messiah is crucified, and so accursed. God himself, then, has made void the law. If one belongs to the Messiah, he is free from the law, be he Jew or gentile. Thus the crucifixion of Jesus is the central point of Paul's system—a necessary condition of forgiveness; The gospel of John erects this narrowing tendency into a leading principle. God does not hear sinners. Those outside the messianic community are outside his care. "I pray not for the world." Jesus seeks not the lost, but takes care that his own

⁴ *Der christliche Gottesglaube, seine Vorgeschichte und Urgeschichte.* Von Oscar Holtzmann. Giessen: Topelmann, 1905. 80 pages. M. 1.40.

are saved. The thought of the gospel is Pauline, it is Jewish, it is that of the growing Christian church, but it is not that of Jesus.

The book is a very clear presentation of the general idea which is represented in Harnack's *What is Christianity?* and, in more extreme form, by Wernle's *Beginnings of Christianity*. It raises again the question: How fundamental are the differences between Jesus, Paul, and the fourth gospel?

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RECENT ARCHÆOLOGICAL DOCUMENTS.

Professor Price's edition of *Some Literary Remains of Rim Sin (Arioch), King of Larsa, about 2285 B. C.*,¹ contains transliteration and translation of eleven inscriptions of Rim Sin and his father, together with the autographed text of Nos. 7 and 8; also introductory remarks, observations, a list of proper names, and a glossary. The author of the standard edition of *The Great Cylinder Inscriptions (A and B) of Gudea* has laid Old Testament students under great obligations by thus collecting the scattered inscriptions of this ancient king, whom science is wont to identify with the Arioch (Eri-Aku),² king of Ellasar, mentioned in Gen., chap. 14, as a contemporary of Abraham. He was the son of Kudur-Mabuk, an Elamite governor of Emutbal, a western district of the Elamite empire, who seated him upon the throne about 2285 B. C., at a time when Hammurabi, the Amraphel³ of the Old Testament, was the Semitic king of Babylon. The eleven inscriptions record the ancestry of Rim Sin, his regal position, his achievements as king and devotee of the gods, and his relation to other cities than Larsa. They are short and written in the archaic ideograph language of early Babylonia.

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¹ *Some Literary Remains of Rim Sin (Arioch), King of Larsa, about 2285 B. C.* By Ira Maurice Price. ["The Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago," Vol. V.] Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1904. Pp. 167-91 and 5 plates.

² See, on the other hand, Zimmern in *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, p. 367.

³ See on this name now Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, p. 214, 3. rem. The *l* of Amraphel belongs, according to Hüsing, to the following מֶלֶךְ; thus read *Amraph li-melek*.